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# Guide

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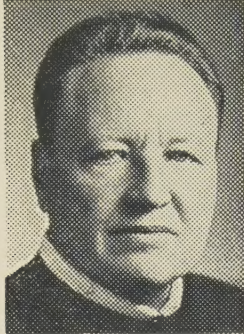
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## A Parish Catechumenate

Many American priests and laity who want to serve the Church constructively in our age of renewal have been concerned with two basic parochial needs. One is the crucial necessity for a continuing religious education for Catholic adults. The other requirement is a new structure for meeting the needs of inquiring non-Catholics. "*A Parish Catechumenate*" by Father Joseph V. Gallagher, C.S.P., has just been published by the Newman Press and can be an immense aid in meeting these two needs.

Every segment in the Church today sees its ablest representatives restudying their religion. Priests, nuns and brothers attend summer courses, flock to special lectures, and undertake intensive courses of reading. Seminary professors and bishops have had no choice but to embark on extensive refresher studies. But what of the great mass of the faithful? The precious new insights into the Christian Message have scarcely even begun to reach many of them.

A recent gathering of experts asserted: "This doctrinal understanding must be the foundation for the acceptance of present and future development in the pastoral, liturgical and apostolic life of the Church . . . It must come from an extended catechesis in which fundamental insights are communicated in a process that will not only supply information but bring about a conversion and a new commitment within the minds and hearts of (adult) Catholics."

With regard to inquiring non-Catholics, the old inquiry class method—for all its many advantages—was never completely satisfactory. And alert priests and laity have been experimenting with forms of a genuine catechumenate for some years. The restoration of the liturgical catechumenate by the Church in 1962 was a response to a wide world appeal from apostolic priests, and was reaffirmed and extended by the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy. Father Gallagher shows how to retain the best in our older practice and to incorporate this into an improved catechetical and liturgical framework. This is a much needed book.

JOHN T. MCGINN, C.S.P.

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# Catholics and Ecumenism

Wilfred F. Dewan, C.S.P.

*Doctrinal hints for Catholics in Ecumenical Dialogue*

## I DEVELOPMENT OF DOCTRINE

In this time of ecumenism, it is important for Catholics and Protestants to understand the Catholic position on the evolution of doctrine, the belief that the Church continually grows in the understanding of Christ's message.

Some Catholics believe that all the Church's doctrines are permanently settled. They are shaken and troubled when they see any teachings being reconsidered. Protestants, on the other hand, may be tempted to think that evolution of doctrine simply means "Catholics are finally admitting they were wrong," and that as time goes on Catholics will eventually drop even such dogmas as the Assumption of Mary. Non-Catholics have always had trouble with teachings not immediately verifiable in scripture, seeing them as unnecessary stumbling blocks to unity.

### THE FACTS

1. Revelation is the transcendent Word

of God as described in human words. But human words and expressions can never fully capture the divine meaning. We must always continue to seek better definitions, better understanding of the message, especially as found in scripture. Recent studies of biblical formation, imagery, literary forms, neighboring cultures, and so on, have helped immensely.

2. Revelation is a message for *us*, to be lived here and now. Without changing the content, it has to be made relevant and meaningful to our culture, and our existing situation today. Only if it is geared to evoke a personal response is it revelation for *me*. Understanding of doctrine, then, cannot ignore the contributions of psychology, history, sociology, and philosophy, just to mention a few of the sciences.

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Courtesy of The Paulist Press. Reprinted from the Deus Book "Catholic Belief and Practice in an Ecumenical Age." Father Dewan teaches dogmatic theology at St. Paul's College, Washington, D.C., is a writer and lecturer on Ecumenical Theology and is the author of "The One God" in the Prentice-Hall Series.



3. The Church is a living People. And anything living must grow and develop or it dies. The pressure of Christian love, activity and Christian faith seeking understanding will always promote new searches for meanings. It will also result in new insights and a deeper appreciation of God's Word.

More and more we are realizing that this pressure, insight and inspiration can come from many quarters within the Church: from the laity as much as from theologians, bishops or the pope. True development in doctrine will never contradict the inspired Word of God in scripture. But it may well go beyond the obvious meaning of the text to a new understanding of the total Word of God lived by the Church. Indeed, development can touch areas of doctrine, morality and law that are not, and never will be, part of revelation or of infallible decisions. But in all of this the Catholic Church accords a true respect and obedience to the teaching Church, the bishops and pope; for Christ said to their predecessors, "He who hears you hears me."

### EXAMPLES OF DEVELOPMENT

1. *Origin of Man.* Discoveries of science show that the Bible does not teach that the first humans were created directly by God. Thus the scriptural account is perfectly compatible with ideas of the evolution of the human body.

2. *Understanding Christ.* It took until the 5th century to find words for our present definition of Christ as true God and true man. And today a better understanding of human psychology is helping us appreciate better the fullness of his humanity, how he truly grew in knowledge and experience, how he could be God and yet experience fear, loneliness and pain. Again, the central importance of the resurrection in Christ's redemptive work is adding a whole new perspective to many aspects of theology.

3. *Grace.* Without denying the true interior reality of grace, there is new awareness of grace as the graciousness of God toward us, that God's gift of himself to us in Christ is the greatest of all graces. Also, we realize more than ever that the relationship of the

Christian to God is rooted in the mystery of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit dwelling within us.

### THE CHURCH

4. *Church.* Increasingly we see the Church as the People or Family of God in whom Christ is made visible to the world today, and we see the sacraments as actions of Christ in his Church. There has also been development regarding the way in which separated Christians are seen as truly (if still imperfectly) a part of this Church.

5. *Authority and Freedom.* To balance the traditional and necessary insistence on the need for authority, there is new emphasis on the role of free, personal and existential commitment to Christ who comes to us in his Church. Also, we are gaining a deeper insight into the worth of each person, the inviolability of human conscience, and the freedom of worship resulting from this.

### EUCARIST AND MARRIAGE

6. *Eucharist.* Post-Reformation apologetics concentrated on the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and the vivid portrayal of the Mass as a sacrifice. Now there is a return to a more biblical concept of the Eucharist as the sacred meal of the Christian community. Liturgical changes have all been aimed in this direction. The Mass is sacrificial only through its oneness with the once-and-for-all sacrifice of Christ.

7. *Marriage.* Until recently heavy emphasis was laid on marriage as a divine means of populating the world and heaven. Love and pleasure were seen as the reward or even bait for accomplishing this. Now we have a fuller realization of the role of love and sexuality in marriage, the sex act being the normal expression and incarnation of married love. The population explosion, a concern for education, health, the needs of society and the realities of economics are all factors to be considered in discussing responsible parenthood.



## II CAUTIONS TO CATHOLICS

In this ecumenical age, we Catholics have a duty to understand and live our faith at its best. There are some areas of conflict and danger, where excesses or incomplete ideas or lack of balance needlessly offend our non-Catholic brothers. Not all our emphases and practices of past years have been blameless. We are learning and trying to correct our ideas when needed, to complete them where desirable. Catholics need to beware of:

1. *Immobilism*: thinking that we have all the answers, that our religion is fixed for all time. Actually, we need constant revision, updating, in doctrine, moral applications, and law.

2. *Triumphalism*: thinking we are just about perfect as a Church. We have had a tendency to look down our noses at others, willing to accept them back into the fold only when they repent. Actually, we are still a pilgrim Church whose members are sinners. We need constant reform and renewal. Pope John threw open the doors and windows of the Church to let out the stale air of outdated practices and let in the invigorating (if sometimes disconcerting) fresh air of dialogue with others.

### SLIGHTING SCRIPTURE

3. *Slighting of scripture*: while there has always been official appreciation, reverence and preservation of the Bible, the scriptures are often unfamiliar to Catholics. The inspired Word of God needs a greater place in everyday life and thinking. Perhaps the daily reading of scripture ought to replace some other private devotion.

4. *Grace*: thinking of grace as a "thing" given to us in certain quantities and increased automatically by every sacrament. Actually, our response and openness to God are very important to growth in grace, for grace involves a relationship which grows in depth.

5. *Overemphasizing merit*: thinking of Christianity as a sort of do-it-yourself religion, where if we do so much, God has to do the rest. Protestants are opposed to any-

thing that seems like "bargaining" with God. God does not have to guarantee us salvation if we make nine First Fridays. Confidence in prayer is certainly good, but we should not believe that God *owes* us things because we pray, or that "semi-automatic" growth to holiness will result from simply doing things like multiplying prayers, novenas, sacramentals or rosaries.

Remember, grace is first of all God's gracious gift of himself to us, the Trinity dwelling within us, continually making possible our very response to him. The best we can do is allow God to work in us, saying "yes" to his initiative.

### CENTRAL TRUTHS

6. *Neglecting central truths*: placing too great an emphasis on secondary aspects of the faith, such as novenas, indulgences, private devotions or God's private revelations to saints, while neglecting the absolutely central roles of Christ, the Trinity, and the Mass as the great act of worship of the Christian family.

7. *Legalism*: equating Christianity with the keeping of rules, commandments, do's-and-dont's. Thus, some Catholics keep all the explicit rules about Mass on Sunday, abstaining from meat on Friday and artificial birth control. But they neglect many social obligations to love all, to be honest in business, etc. Christianity is love of Christ and neighbor. All the other rules are but an expression of this.

8. *Exaggerated notion of the authority of the pope*: thinking that everything said by the pope or bishops is irrevocable and infallible. The pope is infallible only when he speaks with his full authority, when he speaks about faith and morals, and when he manifestly intends to bind all Christians irrevocably. This is *very* rare in the life of the Church.

9. *Isolationism*: advocating a withdrawal from the "wicked world," or being aloof to all who are not Catholic. We have a Christian duty to bring Christ to the world wherever we can: in education, science, and social concerns. And only by common witness with all other Christians can we make the impact upon the world that we should.



### III CATHOLIC TRENDS TODAY

1. Away from the apologetic, defensive, cut-and-dried textbook theology, to a highly biblical approach centered on Christ.

2. Away from a rigid and highly centralized authority in matters of doctrine, law, and liturgy, to more flexibility; more awareness of differences in culture, personal approach and existential situations.

3. Away from faith as the acceptance of mere facts, to faith as the total and personal acceptance of Christ, as a true I-Thou encounter.

4. Away from a sin-dominated and fear-dominated morality, to a more Christ-centered and love-centered morality.

5. Away from mere personal piety, to a sense of being part of the Church as a Family of God.

6. Hence, away from merely watching or attending the Church's liturgy, the Mass and the sacraments especially, to more of a joyful celebration by the whole Christian community.

### TRIUMPHALISM

7. Away from triumphalism in the Church and belief that we are members of a perfect Church, to an accent on the pilgrim nature of the members who are still searching and in need of humility, repentance and renewal.

8. Away from an attitude of frigid aloofness toward other Christians, to a deep interest in ecumenism with its desire for unity and all means that will foster it.

9. Away from seeing the Church as a monarchy with the pope at the top, to a more episcopal structure directed by a college of bishops whose head and center is the pope seen as a bishop of bishops.

10. Away from a Church dominated largely by the clergy to a Church in which all people have a role and contribution. Authority will always be necessary, but it is being seen now as a service to the whole people. True freedom and respect for all members is growing as the role of the lay Catholic becomes clearer.

### IV WHERE WE DIFFER

Catholics should not exaggerate their differences with other Christians, but neither should they hide true differences in the mistaken notion that this promotes unity. In spite of surprising agreement on many issues, especially between liberal Catholics and non-Catholics, some real differences remain.

After the following beliefs of Catholics we list in parentheses other Churches that would have no difficulty with them:

1. The Catholic Church is the one true Church in the sense explained on pages 28-29. (Orthodox and Anglicans agree, because they consider themselves part of the Catholic Church.)

2. Tradition, the life and consciousness of the whole Church, is the necessary interpreter of the scriptural message; the Word of God in the Church clarifies and interprets the Word of God in scripture. (Orthodox. There is sympathy for this among ecumenically-minded Protestants, but they would not say the Church can have the *last* word in the interpretation.)

### EPISCOPAL STRUCTURE

3. The Church is not democratic but episcopal in structure, ruled with true authority by a college of bishops. (Orthodox, Anglicans and, to some extent Methodists.) The pope, as the bishop of bishops, has real primacy of power and authority, not merely of honor.

4. The Church is infallible, protected by the Holy Spirit from error in defining matters of faith and morals. The bishops and pope are official spokesmen of this infallibility.

5. Grace results in a true interior change of the recipient. (Orthodox; many other Christians come close to this belief.) The life of grace can grow. Men can truly merit God's grace by their free acceptance of it and cooperation with it. (Orthodox.)

6. Sacraments are real instruments and causes of grace. (Orthodox and Anglicans.) There are *seven* sacraments which have their origins in Christ. (Orthodox.)

7. Besides the priesthood of all baptized there is a priesthood of the ordained that is truly different, conferring a "power" to forgive sin in the name of Jesus, and to bring about the eucharistic presence of Christ. (Orthodox and some Anglicans.) Also, valid orders are conferred only by Roman Catholic and Orthodox bishops. (It may be discussable whether the "power" is something intrinsically new—as is generally held by Catholics—or not.)

8. During the eucharistic service (Mass) the risen Christ becomes truly present in his body, blood, soul and divinity under the visible forms of bread and wine. (Orthodox. While some Anglicans and Lutherans believe the same, Catholics maintain that valid ordination is necessary, no matter how sincere one may be about belief in the real presence. But this is not to deny *some* sacramental reality in non-Catholic eucharistic services.)

9. One has an obligation to confess serious sin to a priest. (Orthodox.) This may not be divine law—so it may be possible for this to change.

10. Devotion is due to the Virgin Mary and the saints. (Orthodox and some others.)

11. Mary was preserved through God's graciousness from original sin (Immaculate Conception) and was taken in her body and soul to heaven at the end of her life (Assumption). (These beliefs are part of Orthodox piety but are not dogma.)

12. Purgatory exists and our prayers are somehow helpful to the souls there. (Orthodox.)

13. Consummated sacramental marriage is indissoluble.

14. The following beliefs and practices are characteristic of the Catholic Church, but not necessarily unchangeable:

(a) Clergy in the Western Church must remain unmarried.

(b) Birth control by mechanical means is prohibited. (Mechanical means of birth control are said to be opposed to the natural law. However an evolution of doctrine is not impossible on this point. The Church realizes today that what is "natural" involves far more than biological functions.)

(c) Attending Mass on Sunday, fasting and abstinence precepts, and similar disciplinary laws are concrete formulations of the need for social worship and for doing penance.

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# The Miracles of Jesus

F. Somerville

## *CURRENT TEACHING PRESENTED ACCORDING TO AGE*

Catechists have observed that young people today, accustomed to the marvels achieved by modern scientists, fail to be impressed by the arguments for Christ's divinity from his miracles when one relies upon the apologetic notion of miracle. The still too common definition of a miracle as "marvellous event occurring within the sphere of sensible experience, which involves the suspension of some law of nature, and hence must be attributed to the direct action of God" is much too narrow, since it leaves out the meaning and purpose of miracles. The catechist needs to know and present miracles for what they are, namely signs addressed by God to men in the context of the religious dialogue; he makes known his goodness and power and invites men to accept his reign.

### *EVENTS IN HISTORY*

The miracles of Jesus should not be treated as isolated facts or stories, but as events in the history of salvation. They are interventions of God in history to make

himself known. Jesus performed them to show that the kingdom or reign of God was now present and that he was bringing salvation. As such it is more important to draw the attention of students to the person who performs these saving actions than to the material fact of a healing or a storm subsiding. In this way the students come to see miracles as historical manifestations of the redeeming Incarnation: "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us . . . we have beheld his glory" (Jn. 1:14).

### *MIRACLES AS SIGNS*

The miracles are signs. Jesus meant them to signify something. So it is not enough for the pupils to know exactly what happened to water, to the leper . . . They need to learn the message contained in the miracle. For example, at Cana where his first miracle took place, Jesus manifested his glory (God's presence in him) and his early disciples believed in him (Jn. 2:11); the leper made clean symbolises the return of the sinner to the society of God's people



(Mk. 1:40-45). In order to help the pupils read the signs the catechist will link up the words of Jesus with his miracles, e.g. "I am the light of the world," said before giving sight to the blind man (Jn. 9), help to an understanding of the meaning of the miracle. Indeed, the teaching and the miracles go together, and the teaching in a sense is more important, for the good news he proclaimed could by itself win men over to Christ, but the miracles would be unavailing to anyone who closed his ears to the words of Christ.

### **EACH A SPECIAL MEANING**

As the miracles are signs, each with its own significance, we should respect this special meaning. Often enough a preacher or catechist seizes upon some secondary aspect of a miracle in order to support some point of doctrine he wishes to drive home. For example, the story of blind Bartimaeus (Mk. 10:46-52) is told to illustrate the power of persevering prayer, whereas according to the evangelists Christ the light was bringing light into darkness and here giving sight to a man who showed faith in him. Likewise, it is a mistake to use miracles simply as concrete illustrations of a doctrinal point one happens to be teaching. Thus, one finds a lesson on ingratitude and gratitude built up around the ten lepers (Lk. 17:11-17). No doubt, in the devotional reading of Scripture we may draw helpful thoughts for our own life, but in catechesis we should respect the particular doctrinal bearing of each miracle. The best guides to follow in this faithful treatment are the Gospel narratives themselves. Sometimes the context in which a miracle is placed throws light on its meaning; thus in allowing the apostles to make a miraculous haul of fish (Lk. 5:1-11) Our Lord was teaching symbolically what was to be their mission; the multiplication of the loaves in a desert place and as prelude to the discourse on the bread of life obviously points to the reception of the Eucharist. Sometimes the evangelists furnish certain details which indicate their own interpretation of the miracle, as when the synoptists link up Our Lord's words of forgiveness with his healing the paralytic (Mk. 2:12); they undoubtedly understood this

physical healing as a symbol of his saving activity on a spiritual level.

### **CHRIST'S ACTIONS THEN AND NOW**

The catechist should link up the Gospel miracles of Jesus with his actions today. Many good Christians imagine that his works of power belong to past history and have had their day, except for the occasional rare miracle which comes to light in a canonization process or at a place like Lourdes. Yet if we teach the Gospel miracles correctly as signs, we will teach that they are signs of the still greater wonders which Christ performs in his Church today, as he continues to build up the Kingdom of God. The Christian sacraments are in a line with the Gospel miracles; they are signs of Christ's presence in the Church as he gives, strengthens and nourishes life and health. He is present more hiddenly through grace in the members of his Mystical Body saving them from evil and leading them on the way to eternal salvation. Moreover, as the first Vatican Council declared, the very existence of the Church continued throughout the centuries, faithful to her mission in spite of hindrances from within and without is a moral miracle testifying to Christ's active presence in her.

### **MODERN MIRACLES**

We do not exclude references to modern miracles, but we would advise great reserve in the use of them. The Church herself is extremely cautious and slow to accept any of these wonderful happenings as genuine signs from God. The catechist might well imitate her caution, and if reference is made to an authentic miracle he should show its connection with the full life of the Church.

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## THE DIVINE INTENTION

The Gospel miracles of Jesus provoked surprise and wonder because they were so extraordinary. They can do so today among our pupils; but it would be a mistake for the catechist to put the main emphasis on the extraordinariness of the event and allow their attention to be concentrated on the physical aspect. The chief importance of miracles is that God was and is saving men through Jesus Christ by means of signs, and Jesus Christ himself wanted and wants men to understand the saving work he has come to do. This divine action and purpose are the main aspect to be brought out in catechesis. St. John, who always brings out the intention of Christ in a miracle sets us an example to follow. We today are living the reality announced by the miracles in Palestine; Christ is bringing salvation to men in our own days with still greater signs. By making pupils see the intention of Christ, we avoid making the miracles a matter of past history, but we show them to be signs of God's present-day saving activity through Christ.

## CLASSROOM PROCEDURE

Let us suppose we have come now to study in the classroom a particular miracle of Jesus. What procedure may be recommended? First, remembering that a miracle is a sign from God to men, and therefore calls for faith for a right understanding, the catechist will try to stimulate the faith in the pupils. This may be done by trying to create a religious atmosphere during the lesson, and in particular by a carefully prepared reading of the Gospel narrative with special stress on the key words and phrases.

The catechist then explains the fact of the miraculous event. One can reconstruct the scene, without any fanciful embroidering of the situation. This objective reconstruction ought to make the pupils realize that here is a situation in which they, or someone they know, might easily find themselves, e.g. suffering from some disease, from hunger, from some imminent danger. Both the exceptional character of the fact and

the religious context in which it occurred will also be pointed out, as both are essential to a miracle.

After describing what happened the catechist goes on to tell what purpose Our Lord had in mind, some purpose which his action—and sometimes his word—makes known. It is always to effect some spiritual good. All his miracles are for the benefit of *people*; he wants to help people, save them, give them fuller life. The catechist might invite the children to imagine themselves alongside the apostles watching Jesus, listening to his interpretation and reflecting upon this sign from God. Or it may be suggested that they imagine themselves in the place of Our Lord standing before the sick person or the possessed boy: what does Our Lord see? What is he thinking? What does he want to do? What does he want to teach the individual and the bystanders?

As the miracles do not belong simply to the two or three years of public ministry the catechist brings them into the present. Our Lord has in mind to teach us today that he brings to us a wonderful bread that nourishes us for eternal life, he raises us to a new life which is better than the restored life of Lazarus, he gives the light to see how to walk in the way of God, he rescues us from the power of Satan. In the sacraments and the whole life of the Church he continues among us his saving mission. Thus, the pupil's faith in Christ, our contemporary, is strengthened and nourished.

## MIRACLES ACCORDING TO AGE

So far in our suggestions we have not taken into account the age of the pupils, although it is clear that some differentiation is required. As with the parables, catechists run the risk of repeating the miracle stories year after year without discrimination and the pupils tire of hearing them without really understanding them. The evidence of this produced by Harold Loukes in "Teen-age Religion" is largely applicable to our own schools. One would like, then, a list or classification of miracles according to suitability to age-group, recognizing that some may well be repeated in a different context. The making of such a selection would call



for a combined study by a group of teachers that covers all age-groups. In the absence of such a study—as far as we are aware—we offer some suggestions for consideration.

The child of 5-7 years, though at the age of fantasy, is very open to the world of faith. He is not able to grasp the religious significance of miracles, but if the catechist relates the episode with a sense of reverence, mystery and love, the child will become conscious of the religious character of miracles and he will learn that Our Lord likes to help people. The catechist of children will not stress the miraculous element, and need not even use the word miracle. Only a few will be told, e.g. the water turned into wine, raising the son of the widow of Naim, the calming of the storm, healing of the official's son, feeding of the five thousand (Mk. 6:20-44).

Lower juniors, 7-9, are capable of appreciating facts external to themselves, though these facts should be close to their own experience. Thus the healings wrought by Jesus will be meaningful to these children. One can choose the healing of Simon's mother-in-law, the ten lepers, the deaf-mute, the two blind men, blind Bartimeus, the leper (Lk. 5:12-13).

Upper juniors, 9-11, are becoming more conscious of relationships with other people. One can, then, try to bring out the relationships that were set up between Jesus and the people he helped. For this age-group one may discuss the raising of Jairus' daughter, the woman with hemorrhage, the paralytic at Capernaum, the walking on the water, the raising of Lazarus.

With the 11-12 year olds the catechist

could take the individual miracles to make known that Jesus was indeed the messenger of God, the Saviour of men and Son of God. As these pupils are still at the objective stage, they need to be given some historical and geographical background to the narratives. Selected miracles might be: the shekel in the fish's mouth, the man with dropsy, the infirm woman (Lk. 13:10-17), the man with the withered hand.

### CHRIST'S SAVING WORKS

By the time the pupils are 13 or 14, they are probably beginning to experience some confusion between the miracles of Jesus and the wonderful achievements of scientists. So it now becomes more important than before to present miracles as actions of Jesus which draw attention to his own person and make people ask themselves who he is. It is also necessary to show the connection between his saving works in Palestine long ago and today among men throughout the world. Miracles to be studied could be the blind man of Bethsaida, Syrophenician woman, man born blind, the sick man at the pool of Bethsaida, the epileptic boy, the possessed man in the synagogue, the blind and dumb demoniac, the deaf-mute, the gerasene demoniac.

Finally, in the last year the miracles could be treated globally to bring out the theology as outlined in the early part of this article: a sign-language, signs of salvation, signs leading to faith, signs of the transformed universe at the end of time.

*"We, who more than any other person experience the limits of human possibilities, all the more trust in God, who draws from every circumstance, even if adverse, beneficial results for our destiny and for the coming of His reign of justice and peace."*

Pope Paul VI

# An Interview on Contraception

with John T. Noonan, Jr.

In your book "Contraception," which traces the gradual development of Catholic thinking on marriage and marital intercourse from the first century to the twentieth, how do you approach the subject—as an historian, a moral theologian, a lawyer?

My approach is that of an historian. In other words, I am trying to understand what people actually said to understand what they meant when they said it. This historical task involves putting texts into context. It is a task distinct from that of the moral theologian who will give guidance to the faithful in the light of the Church's authoritative teaching or who will solve particular problems of conscience. The historian of moral thought, like the lawyer, is interested in the reasons for rules. Unlike the lawyer, however, the historian is not trying to win a case; he is trying to understand a process.

With twenty centuries of Catholic tradition to plow through, how did you accomplish such a monumental task in two years?

The great advantage of doing historical work in an area where tradition is respected is that there already exists a vast number of cross references back to important authorities of the past, and there is a constant check on authorities provided by the system

of citation of authorities used. In this way working in scholastics and canonists is not significantly different from working within the Anglo-American case law system as far as discovering authorities is concerned.

Where did you find most of your source material?

Much of the relevant source material is printed, although some of the material exists only in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century editions. One very good collection is at the Boston Medical Library. It was there that I found *The Moral Questions* by Martin LeMaistre (Paris, 1490), an author who has been very much neglected and who, I think, is an important one.

What prompted you to write about this subject in the first place?

My previous work on the development of the Church's absolute prohibition of profit on a loan, in a book published in 1957 called *The Scholastic Analysis of Usury* prompted

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my colleagues at Notre Dame Law School to suggest that I investigate the development of a more controversial moral rule, that is, the Church's teaching on marital intercourse.

**Does your book have a thesis?**

The book has no explicit thesis. In showing a development, however, and in showing the line of development, it probably suggests conclusions which may legitimately be drawn.

**How would you summarize trends in terms of the Church's attitude toward human sexuality?**

In the early centuries the Church was concerned to defend the procreative aspect of sexuality. Procreation was stressed as the sole lawful purpose for initiating intercourse. There was a fairly marked tendency to disassociate Christian love and marital intercourse. It would appear that this disassociation was largely in reaction to groups who abused the idea of Christian freedom. The teaching of Vatican II on the value of conjugal love as a purpose of intercourse is a far cry from the early Stoic notions which many Christian theologians of the first seventeen centuries adopted.

**Are there any parallels in Protestant and Jewish attitudes?**

I don't know enough about Protestant thought to speak definitively. It is my impression that the main lines of Protestant thought on marriage were even more conservative than the Catholic approach. But in the early twentieth century a different Protestant approach appeared. As to Jewish attitudes, it is clear from the Old Testament that there was much less appreciation of the personal relation between man and wife in marriage. There is a slow development here; Jewish thought continued to give an unequal freedom to men in distinction from women. In a good deal of Rabbinic writing there is a fussy ritual concern about sexual prescriptions which is later parodied in the worst of the Catholic theologians.

**What would you consider to be the greatest breakthrough in Catholic thinking on human sexuality?**

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*When the Papal Commission on Problems of the Family, Population and Natality (birth control commission) met, one of the consultants most carefully listened to was John T. Noonan, Jr., author of the first modern, comprehensive study of the development of Catholic teaching on birth control (Contraception: A History of its Treatment by the Catholic Theologians and Canonists, Harvard University Press, 1965). Dr. Noonan has said that he hopes his study will begin to do for moral theology what contemporary scripture scholarship has been doing for biblical science: moral teaching as well as biblical authorship must be understood in terms of historical context, i.e., the author's personal life, the society in which he lived, the state of theological and scientific knowledge, the literary form in which the teaching is cast. John Noonan is professor of law, Notre Dame Law School and editor of Natural Law Forum.*

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The great breakthrough in Catholic thought came when a positive value was given to marital intercourse. This recognition was largely in response to a development of Western society in the nineteenth century in the course of which freedom of choice in marriage became the ideal and women became more or less equal with men. A second important breakthrough was the rejection of the rule of St. Augustine that the only lawful purpose for initiating intercourse was the procreative purpose. This was rejected, partly as the result of thoughtful theological analysis by persons like LeMaistre at the University of Paris; but the definitive rejection occurred only in the seventeenth century when Augustine's reputation in general had suffered a decline because of his use by the Lutherans and the Jansenists. This rejection of the necessity of tying every lawful sexual act to procreation really begins the modern trend.

You have remarked that great changes in Catholic thinking on human sexuality were made during the past twenty-five years. What philosophical currents, cultural factors or religious attitudes were most significant in these changes?

The phenomenology of Edmund Husserl and Max Scheler in the 1920's obviously had a marked influence on Herbert Doms, who wrote the most important Catholic book on the value of conjugal love, *The Meaning and End of Marriage* (1935). Personalism has had a considerable influence on the theologians of the 1950's and '60's. The new appreciation of the laity, which becomes marked in ecclesiastical circles after World War II, is also a significant factor.

Any other reasons why theological development was retarded?

The theologians up until the fifteenth century gave almost no weight to the experiences of virtuous Christian couples. Beginning with the German theologian, Denis the Carthusian (d. 1471), and the Scottish theologian, John Major (d. 1550), they began to look to the experience of husbands and wives. However, only in the last thirty years has there been much reliance on the experience of the Christian couple devoutly seeking salvation. The moral theologians until about 1925 were also indifferent to history, that is, to what Catholic moral teachers of the past had actually taught, what they meant when they taught it and the historical circumstances which prompted their teaching. Today the value of the historical approach is still probably underrated by a number of moral theologians.

In your book you state that the Church has built a "wall" around five basic values (procreation as a good, its completion in education, the sacredness of innocent life, the personal dignity of the spouses, holiness of married love) and that this wall must not become a prison, but rather a bulwark of protection. Is change then possible, in view of the condemnation of contraception by Pope Pius XI and the subsequent statements by Pope Pius XII?

I don't want to stand on the metaphor of the "wall." I do believe that there is nothing

in the authoritative teaching of the Church on contraception which would prevent a considerable modification of the existing rule.

How has the Council affected this wall? Schema 13, now the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, adopted by an overwhelming vote of the Council in December 1965, opens the door to considerable revision by bringing to the fore the values of parental responsibility and conjugal love in intercourse. Nothing in this Constitution, however, changes the teaching as to what the present rule on contraception is; the Council simply says there is a rule and refers to the relevant documents, leaving the task of "concrete solutions" to the Papal Commission.

What about the problems the Council didn't touch?

The Council says that it does not intend to touch the problems of contraception "directly" because this is reserved to the Pope. Obviously, the Council's teaching on parental responsibility and conjugal love must affect any new thinking on the present rule.

The Catholic research scholar must be true to his vocation, announcing the truth as he sees it. But what about the bishops and any new understanding of the problems of contraception? If there is a change, would you expect the announcement to be withheld, at least temporarily, for the sake of the faith of the people, who have been so conditioned against change? And how would any change be reconciled with infallibility?

I don't think that truth should be withheld from the faithful. I do think that any modification of the rule has to be presented as a development of doctrine. The fact that a doctrine is infallible (and just how the Church's teaching on human sexuality is infallible is under theological examination) does not mean it cannot develop.

Where do you think the major focus of the Church's future study should be?

The Church has a major role to play in educating the faithful and the world about the values of marriage. I should think a great deal of research would go on as to



marriage and as to the best way the Church could reach the people in teaching in this area.

What role has your research played in the present discussion of the problem of contraception?

I believe that showing the historical context of a number of past statements on contraception may have contributed to an understanding of the process of decision that went on in the past—a process that is now being gone through in our time. I should suppose that almost all of our rules on moral questions would be aided by an understanding of the process by which we have reached them.

Isn't the key question here the fact that contraception comes into conflict with the natural law?

One important question is what is the teaching of natural law in this area. The old argument as to the natural purpose of sexual intercourse as a biological function does seem to me to have been transcended. The emphasis now, as in the Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, is on the broader question of the requirements "of the nature of a person and his acts." I believe that reference to natural law in a question like this means that there is something here to be decided by human reason and not by arbitrary authority or by personal whim.

Obviously, people can and have disagreed as to what is rational and therefore natural, in many moral situations. Catholics have a controlling guide furnished by the teaching Church setting forth with authority what is the rational rule.

What has the writing of "Contraception" done for your understanding of Catholicism? The purposes and basic goods committed to the care of the Church do not change; the rules safeguarding them may. The usury rule—no profit on a loan—was once stated as an absolute rule because in the medieval environment it was necessary to prevent exploitation, but it no longer holds in its absolute form. The nineteenth-century anti-clericals took this change as clear evidence of the fallibility of the Church. In this they were mistaken, supposing the Church to be bound to a mechanical rigidity. They did not understand that the Church grows as a living organism grows. It would be better for all Catholics if they could understand that the Church is, as the Gospels teach, a seed that grows into a tree. Its vitality is organic. There is no need for surprise or shock when, while maintaining its organic identity, it discards particular rules as now "out-of-date."

What project are you working on now? A study of the matrimonial courts of the Church: their functions and procedures.

## PRAYER AND FAITH

*"... To those who do not believe, of course, prayer is an absurdity. But it is not so clear whether prayer is an absurdity because one does not believe in God, or whether one does not believe in God because one does not pray.*

*"Belief and prayer are inextricable. To come to recognize God is to become aware of standing in a conscious presence; it is to stand in silent, wordless communication; and this is prayer. To come to believe is to begin to pray. Not to believe is to stand outside a conversation."*

*Michael Novak, Belief and Unbelief.*

# Books Received

A Parish Catechumenate  
Joseph V. Gallagher, C.S.P.  
Newman. \$4.95

Catechetics for young Catholics in the grades and in high school and religious education for those at higher institutions of learning have advanced enormously in the last decade. And good texts in these areas have multiplied with this advance in American catechetics. A notable lag, however, has existed in courses and texts especially designed to bring the results of the new catechetics to adults. Father Gallagher's book is addressed to grown-up Catholics, to inquiring non-Catholics, and to authentic catechumens. And it is a notable and highly serviceable contribution indeed.

The book is divided into two sections. Part one is a "Presentation of the Gospel." This includes seventeen chapters covering the history of salvation. The emphasis is on the scriptural basis for fundamental Catholic teachings. It encourages scriptural reading in each group session and the active cooperation of lay co-instructors with the priest-catechist. Discussion periods are provided for. And the power of God's word through a total parish witness aims to lead the Catholic adult to a re-affirmation of his baptismal covenant and the adult inquirer to initial faith in Christ. The chapters in this section have already appeared in *Guide* where they attracted considerable favorable attention.

Part II consists of materials for nine sessions and is entitled "A Preparation for Baptism." It constitutes, for the adult non-Catholic, a true catechumenate adapted to the needs of our country today. For those who have made an initial commitment to Christ, the text spells out the steps leading to actual baptism—with homilies, prayers and discussions centering on the Christian life as lived by Catholics. The spiritual, moral and liturgical elements predominate here. Catholic adults can participate, in their own way, in this part of the program.

The writer is clear, down-to-earth, and

as comprehensive as a small volume will allow. His long practical experience as an instructor and as an ecumenist is everywhere evident. American parishes will find this a mighty useful book.

Functional Asceticism  
Donald L. Gelpi, S.J.  
Sheed and Ward. \$3.95

The author contrasts two approaches to asceticism. The first is a nominalistic outlook which mistakes some conceptualization of the reality of the religious life for the genuine article. This attitude has long honored and preserved antiquated and even fossilized religious practices which had lost much of their utility. In place of this rigid attitude, the author proposes an approach which concentrates on the apostolic purpose within the Church's mission of a given religious community. This daily preoccupation, the writer contends, could result in a type of asceticism that is genuine and effective rather than one which tends to be artificial and irrelevant.

In the wider horizons opened up by our world and the Vatican Council, the writer explains that "functional asceticism presupposes an apostolically-oriented community of selfless love as the matrix of its growth." While not unappreciative of the positive achievements of the "nominalistic" attitude, he does not hesitate to criticize its ghetto mentality, legalism and spiritual anemia. And he warns against the possibility of a nominalistic version of renewal which simply changes one type of rigidity for another.

In a most striking introduction, Father McNaspy joins the author in a plea, not for the elimination or neglect of the Cross, but only for the gradual replacing of a faulty asceticism with one that is a genuine acceptance of Christ's death and resurrection. This we find in the challenges, trials and anxieties Christ actually sends us in our own day and in our own world.



The Work of  
John the Baptist  
Jean Danielou, S.J.  
*Helicon*. \$3.95

"At certain decisive moments, at certain crossroads of history, God raises up men who are to inaugurate a new stage in the history of salvation." It is in this perspective that Father Danielou writes of the unique person and role of John the Baptist. Like Abraham, Moses and the Prophets, John carried forward magnificently the great plan of God.

But in the case of John, there are unusual features. He stands at the very juncture of the old and the new covenants, and by the testimony of scripture, represents the ideal union of a man and his mission. Scholarly studies, especially in the Dead Sea Scrolls indicate he may have been connected for a time with the Essenes at Qumran. His mission and baptism of repentance announced the new age, although he only prepared men for the Spirit. Conferring the Spirit was to be Christ's work.

The relations between Jesus and John, the latter's seeming trial of faith, and the significance of his martyrdom make him an unforgettable person. All this and much more is made more memorable by Father Danielou's book. Islam venerates him as well as Christians of East and West. And he is precursor even today—preparing for Christ's coming to individual men and his coming at the end of time.

Living With Christ  
The Christian Brothers  
*St. Mary's College Press*  
Winona, Minn.

This is a series of materials designed for course three for high school classes in catechetics, recently revised after experimentation. Fourteen booklets constitute the basic texts. While rich in fundamental scriptural and theological content, the aim is to locate the students where they are with the actual questions and problems they experience, and then help them relate Christian wisdom to their daily concerns. The authors rightly probe beneath the immedi-

ate, surface questions of teenagers to their fundamental aspirations and difficulties. They ask about sex, parents and drink but are really concerned about the person, interpersonal relationships, security and fulfillment.

A *Teaching Guide*, consisting of inserts to accompany the basic texts, assists the teacher by means of various suggestions, projects and pertinent readings suitable for developing each of the main chapters. *Readings in Catechetics* are papers by some of our leading theologians and catechists admirably chosen to give the teacher knowledge in depth and to enrich his grasp of the topics to be treated. A final booklet provides suggested audio visual aids aimed at immediate usefulness, but also to stimulate the teacher to original creativity.

An imaginative, sound, effective approach to teaching religion to high school students that should be widely available to catechists. Similar materials for courses one and two are also available. J.T.M.

## GUIDE

- A publication of the Paulist Institute for Religious Research.
- Officers: Joseph V. Gallagher, C.S.P., *Director*. George C. Hagmaier, C.S.P., *Associate Director*. Editor of *Guide*, John T. McGinn, C.S.P.
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## GUIDE

2852 Broadway  
New York, New York 10025





# Guide Lights

## A CANADIAN CATECHUMENATE . . .

Out in Vancouver, B.C., an interesting example of a catechumenate is in progress at the Catholic Center. Paulist Fathers Ted Vierra and John Shields, with the help of a dozen dedicated lay co-instructors, have put together a program in Christian formation that combines all of the best elements of modern catechesis. Basically, it consists of a six months' course divided into two phases. The first, or pre-catechumenate phase, lasts for ten weeks, and the second, or catechumenate phase, lasts for seventeen weeks. Weekly meetings take about an hour and a half with a strong emphasis on discussion. The pre-catechumenate is conducted both at the Center and in several centrally located parishes elsewhere in the city.

## A CHANGE IN EMPHASIS . . .

Unlike similar programs elsewhere, this one places the greater emphasis and two-thirds of the time upon the catechumenate phase. A good deal of the doctrinal presentation, usually covered in the pre-catechumenate, is taken up here. Thus, the real meat and potatoes of Christian indoctrination takes place as the catechumen is being inducted into the Church. He is prepared for this by a kind of Christian orientation course that lasts for about ten weeks.

## TALKING AROUND ISSUES . . .

In this pre-catechumenate phase, instead of the usual explanatory presentation of the Catholic faith, the inquirer comes to the Church by discussing particular issues. The theory is that most of the basic issues in life that interest human beings have religious connotations. If these are discussed in some depth and certain of their implications and connections clarified, then many

serious minded people will be brought quite naturally to the threshold of Christian faith. Thus, instead of calling this series an "inquiry class," it is entitled "The Church in the Modern World." Particular topics taken up include such things as "The Value of Human Life," "Marriage and Family Life," "Man in Society," "Truth and Justice," "Religion and Science," "Man and God," "Jesus Christ and Modern Man," "Suffering and Pain," "Death and Destiny." With a few exceptions, none of these subjects in themselves deals directly with religion. Discussion of them begins in quite natural terms, taking advantage of the feelings and convictions that most people have about such things. As the discussion unfolds, it is the task of the leader to prepare the group to hear the Christian response to these issues.

## LISTENING TO VATICAN II . . .

Such an issue-centered discussion takes into account the message of Vatican II about reading the signs of the times. The Council reminds us that many of today's "happenings, needs and desires" contain authentic signs of God's presence. Today, the kind of issue described above calls forth ideals and aspirations that rank high in the desires of many. If God is already speaking to a group of inquirers through these concerns, then basing religious exploration upon them should help the group quickly find him in his Christian fullness.

Actually, in the case of many good but non-religious people, these concerns reflect their deepest and most determined belief,—in effect, they constitute their "religion." What better place to begin a discussion of Christianity?

## ESTABLISHING CHRISTIAN FOUNDATIONS . . .

The catechumenate phase of the program is much more directly concerned with the Christian truths. Here, the concentra-



tion is upon the person of Christ, the Church, the Bible, Worship and the Sacraments, the Christian in Society and in service of the world. Each of these basic Christian realities is discussed in considerable detail, but always against the backdrop of modern life, where in fact it must be lived. Integral to the catechumenate is the liturgy, and the Vancouver program incorporates prayer and liturgical action consistently throughout. The sacrament of Baptism is conferred in four distinct stages with suitable intervals. In addition, there are bible services and other forms of prayer so that the catechumen is initiated into a way of doing as well as a way of understanding.

### **COMMUNITY EFFORT . . .**

The discussion format that is so pronounced in the pre-catechumenate phase is carried over here as well. Naturally, there is a certain amount of presentation by the priest-leader. His task is to present the Christian material which is the basis for discussion. However, it is stressed that the discussion is a common effort with a common goal. Everyone involved,—the priest, the co-instructors, and the catechumens, are all seeking to grow in Christ. This makes their undertaking truly a common one, and their experience of community truly real. It also emphasizes the religious nature of the task in a way that no amount of explanation could. While it is true that many catechumens have only a slender knowledge of the Church, their depth of involvement and growing commitment more than compensate for this. What happens is that Christianity is constantly translated into the life and thought of the catechumen. If he can carry this habit throughout his Catholic life he has a pearl of great price.

### **ALWAYS THE CHURCH . . .**

The great objective in catechesis is to communicate a real sense of the Church. If a catechumen has this, then he is Christian. The kind of Christian initiation described above is a great help in communicating this. Not only are all of the topics mentioned above discussed in an ecclesial context, but also the catechumen's participation in the liturgy and his actual experience of Catholic community in these sessions, make his experience of the Church something real and impressive. He learns Christian truth in a Christian group. People like himself give him insights and holds on this truth. He receives the sacrament of baptism within a Christian group. He discusses worship,

his role in society, and his personal life with God all in terms of the Church. The aim and, it appears also, the result is that catechumens finish this program with a degree of awareness of the Church's reality and place in their life that is the envy of many Catholics.

### **SOME PARTICULAR FACTORS . . .**

One of the things that makes such a program of Christian formation possible is a certain homogeneous character of the catechumens. So many are engaged or married couples, or young persons seeking some deeper meaning in their lives that it is not too difficult to elicit a high degree of participation. These people are very serious-minded, outgoing, and have deep convictions about the things discussed. How well the format would work with a group of different background is hard to tell. Undoubtedly, some adjustment would be necessary. However, no one format is ever going to meet the demands of all situations. The heavy emphasis on discussion and personal contribution evident in the Vancouver program, is the outgrowth of a catechetical effort to meet particular needs in a given situation.

### **A FEW DRAWBACKS . . .**

Much of what I have said about the efforts of Fathers Vierra and Shields has been high praise and their program certainly deserves it. However, nothing is ever perfect in this world and there are a couple of minor drawbacks in this picture, too. The more serious is the fact that most of this introduction to the Church takes place away from the home parish. This means that the catechumen's contacts are extra-parochial and that he will come into his parish a stranger. Ideally, this formation should take place within the parish, but in Vancouver it is done at the center because the parishes are short of manpower. The other drawback that bothers these catechists is the fact that while the indoctrination that these catechumens receive is deeply Christian, at the same time it is not what most of the rest of us have received. This makes for certain problems of adjustment and adaptation when the new catechumen meets the rest of the Church. However, this is the price pioneers always pay, and certainly this catechumenate program, along with others elsewhere, is a real step forward. Surely, for such value received any dedicated Christian would be willing to pay something.

JOSEPH V. GALLAGHER, C.S.P.

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